

January 23, 2020

State of Hawai'i Board of Education
State of Hawai'i Department of Education Superintendent Christina Kishimoto

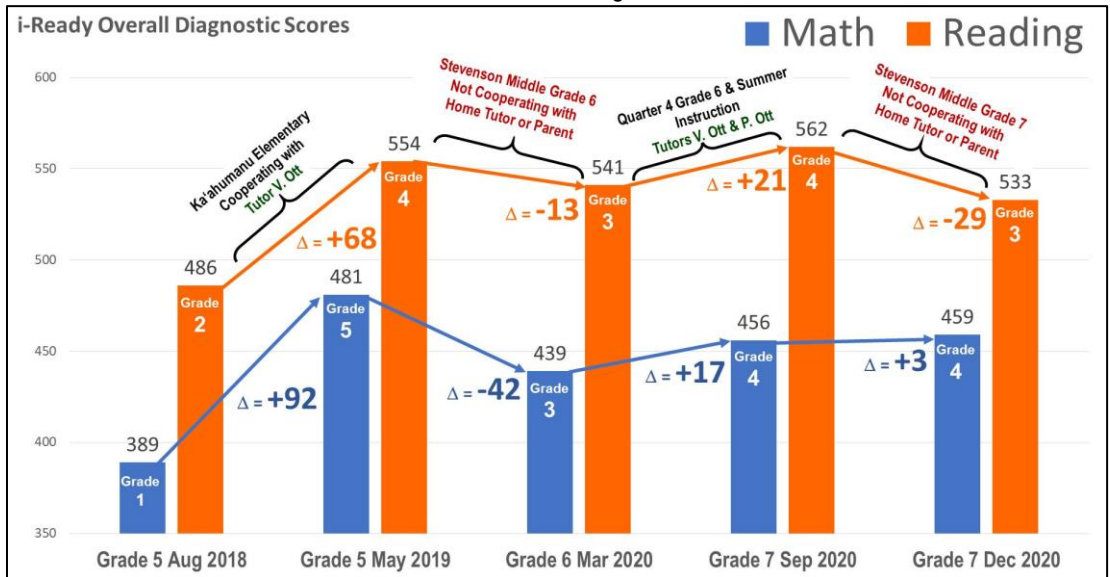
re: **As Fed Up Parents Pull Children from DOE Schools, Funding Dwindles – This Time It Has Nothing To Do with COVID**

Aloha Board of Education Members and Superintendent Kishimoto,

Research shows that children have a greater chance of academic success when schools practice authentic family and community engagement. So why has the Board of Education been ignoring my pleas to fix this *serious* problem? Family and community engagement in DOE schools is worse than nonexistent, it's tragically dysfunctional. DOE schools are toxic environments poisoned not by COVID germs but by the exclusionary and sometimes hostile attitudes which drive its operations. That *should* be your area of concern. Are you concerned?

These diagnostic scores clearly illustrate what lack of family & community engagement in Hawai'i public schools does to our kids. It causes failure, stagnation, and regression. The harassment to which we (the student's mother and I) were subjected when we tried to fix the situation for this child was outrageous!

It got so bad that his desperate, impoverished, Tongan mother is borrowing money from her brother on the mainland to send the child to private school. We envision six and a half years of well-worth-it-scrimping. Within a week of contact, even after this school semester had started, we had



him tested and enrolled in St. Patrick School. The Principal there was **SO** nice. A stark contrast to DOE Principal Balatico of Stevenson Middle School, Complex Area Superintendent Linell Dilwith, Deputy Superintendent Phyllis Unebasami, and the ever silent State of Hawai'i Board of Education who either actively or in absentia allowed all of us to be abused by the DOE in one way or another. St. Patrick School has no problem with me communicating for the mother and being involved in the child's education because THAT'S WHAT THE MOTHER & THE SCHOOL WANT. That's the right thing to do, which of course, escapes the DOE. What a breath of life-giving oxygen compared to the dictatorial, diseased, suffocating, inbred fortress known as the "State of Hawai'i DOE."

As HIDOE plays around with our public monies, and scrambles to balance its budget, let me remind you that the fundamental revenue source for education comes from having students enrolled in school. DUH! So, you should do your best to encourage them to stay enrolled, huh? But nooooo. Our less than illustrious public education system prefers to harass people until they get fed up and leave. For over a decade I have seen good students and teachers escape the tortures of the Hawai'i public education system through private schools, schools in other

states, or other forms of employment/education. Yet the same old problems just keep chuggin' along – Superintendent after Superintendent; Board after Board – and the fundamental problems never get addressed. This family's exodus to a Hawai'i private school is just one more statistic to add to the fodder of damning evidence.

Thankfully, I no longer have any personal connection to public education in Hawai'i. This is liberating, to some extent, but it's also not really true. I cannot liberate myself from my society. The ineptitude and nasty attitudes so prevalent in the Hawai'i DOE affect us all. You on the Board of Education should understand that, and I shouldn't have to educate you about the school to prison pipeline for our underprivileged people.

So why won't the BOE do anything to change the status quo? Why wouldn't BOE Chair Payne talk with the mother and I for the last 10 months for even just five minutes? Why have the issues I've written to the Board about numerous times not appeared on your agendas to even open it up to the public for comment? Why can't we ever fix the core, fundamental problems with the DOE? No accountability. No authentic family and community engagement. No professionalism. Retaliation. Harassment. It's not good.

If you don't believe me that we've been harassed, a list of some of the last year's [incidents of harassment](#) is available online. It's just a list of things DOE employees wrote to me and I wrote to them. It's in their own words. Just read it and you'll see.

Special Education Equity	
Hawai'i DOE Refuses to Respond to State Complaint (07Dec2020)	Dear BOE - Letters to Hawaii Board of Education requesting improvements to policies and rules for greater home-to-school collaboration.
State-Complaint: Inclusion LRF, Untrained DOE Admins (18Sep2020)	Due Process Hearing - The hearing that won't be heard. Parent can't afford and attorney and can't speak English well. That's it. Case closed.
Parent Unwillingly Named As Plaintiff in Due Process Hearing (13Aug2020)	Defamation - (latest: 23 Nov 2020) In an effort to get rid of advocate Vanessa Ott, local school principal begins a campaign to discredit Ms. Ott.
Ethics Complaint: DOE Monitoring & Compliance Branch Refusing to Communicate with Parent (30May2020)	

If you don't remember, weren't around, or didn't read any of the thoughtful solutions I've written to the BOE on these issues and you care to do that now, click the picture or this link to access those letters on my web site: freespeech4us.com/dear-boe

If want to see testimony I've submitted to the Board of Education (often about the lack of accountability, openness, and family/community engagement and the prevalence of harassment), search for my name (Vanessa Ott) at: <https://alala1.k12.hi.us/STATE/BOE/Minutes.nsf/a15fa9df11029fd70a2565cb0065b6b7?OpenView>

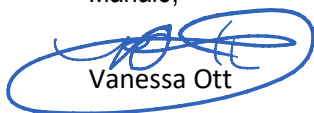
Dear Hawai'i Board of Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27Nov2020 - Lying is Not a Protected DOE Activity • 18Nov2020 - Testimony: Hawaii needs Authentic Family & Community Engagement and Accountability • 16Nov2020 - Stop DOE Bullying; Need Family Engagement • 17Sep2020 - Testimony: Need More Accountability, Not Less • 01 Sep 2020 - End Systemic Racism • 06 May 2020 - Give Parents Right to Choose an Assistant • 07 Feb 2020 - Family & Community Engagement • 07 Nov 2019 - How to Close SpEd Achievement Gap • 08Jun2017 - Adopt a Framework for Community Schools • 08 Oct 2020 - Policy Allowing ELL Parents to Have Assistants

Hawai'i BOE All Meeting Minutes	
<input type="text"/> search results for "'vanessa ott'"	
94 documents found	
Minutes	
<input type="checkbox"/> August 7, 2012	Committee: Human Resource Committee
<input type="checkbox"/> September 4, 2012	Committee: Human Resource Committee
<input type="checkbox"/> September 4, 2012	Committee: Audit Committee
<input type="checkbox"/> October 2, 2012	Committee: Audit Committee
<input type="checkbox"/> October 2, 2012	Committee: Human Resource Committee
<input type="checkbox"/> September 18, 2012	Full Board
<input type="checkbox"/> September 4, 2012	Full Board

This letter will join the fray of others I've written attempting to improve the Hawai'i DOE. Will this one fall on deaf ears, too? I hate writing these letters. I wish I didn't have to, but my moral and ethical obligations to my society don't give me any other choice. If you would address these problems I could stop. Otherwise, my appeals will just keep coming, and going up on my web site, until I am unable to protest from my desk any longer. (The list of letters is getting rather long, BTW). Superintendents, Board Members, parents, students, and teachers may come and go, but Ms. Ott isn't going away until Hawai'i has a better education system or death comes callin' for her.

I prefer the former rather than the latter option – and, uh, sooner rather than later is also preferred. 😊

Mahalo,



Vanessa Ott